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Mr. Perez de Cuellar,
Secretary General of the United Nations,
New York, New York,
USA.

CDPM
DOCUMENTAÇÃO

P.V. Barbara,
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1st September '90.

Dear Secretary General,

I am pleased to see that you are involving yourself personally in discussions to try to defuse or perhaps even resolve the extremely tense and dangerous situation in the Gulf. There is of course a great danger that the UN will be pressured by the US and it's allies such as Britain into giving the US carte blanche to do as it pleases whilst justifying their actions as UN-sponsored. The US has proven on many occassions it's contempt for international law; the most recent examples being it's invasion of Grenada and Panama, and it's running of the thuggish terrorists known as the 'Contras' to destabilise Nicaragua by killing, torturing, raping and maiming Nicaraguan civilians, and sabotaging Nicaragua's economy, in order to overthrow or cause the fall of the legitimate Nicaraguan government and to replace it by one willing to pander to US interests. When the World Court found in favour of Nicaragua, the US refused to accept it's decision. The US seems set on rampaging around the globe, doing what it likes; if it can carry international opinion along with it, all the better; if not, too bad.

Another excellent example of US contempt for the UN and international law was it's behaviour during and after Indonesia's aggressive colonial invasion and annexation of East Timor in 1975. Ninety per cent of the arms used had been supplied by the US, and were used in blatant contravention of their use for anything other than defence; yet the US did nothing, and continued to supply arms, including counter-insurgency aircraft under the Carter administration, which were used with devastating and murderous effect upon the defenceless Timorese. Daniel Moynihan was the US Ambassador to the UN at the time of Indonesia's invasion; in his memoirs, 'A Dangerous Place', he proudly recounts that: 'The United States wished things to turn out as they did (Western Sahara and East Timor) and worked to bring this about. The Department of State desired that the United Nations prove utterly innefective in whatever measures it undertook. This task was given to me, and I carried it forward with no inconsiderable success'. President Ford and Henry Kissinger left Jakarta the day before Indonesia invaded East Timor; when asked the following day to comment on the invasion, President Ford smiled and said 'We'll talk about that later' (Boston Globe 8th December '75).

Britain had a similar attitude. In July '75, some six months before the invasion, the British Ambassador to Jakarta, Sir John Ford, wrote a confidential letter to the Foreign & Commonwealth Office in London. Part of it follows: '...Certainly as seen from here it is in Britain's interest that Indonesia should absorb the territory (East Timor) as soon as and as unobtrusively as possible; and if it comes to the crunch and there is a row in the United Nations we should keep our heads down and avoid siding against the Indonesian Government' (quoted from 'War Against East Timor', Budiardjo and Liong).

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As I'm sure you realise, this letter is not for a moment meant to be an apology for Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. But it is a scandal that bully-boy states such as the US, USSR, Britain and Israel can manipulate votes in the UN or impose a veto when it suits their or their friend's interests. Why was no concerted action taken against Iraq when it invaded Iran, or later when it used chemical weapons against Iran and it's own Kurdish population? Why have no sanctions been imposed upon Israel for it's continued occupation of Arab lands?

I don't know what is going to come of the present situation in the Gulf; at present it must be occupying all of your attention. What I ask of you is that as soon as some sort of resolution has been found, and things settle down to some kind of 'normality', you spare some time and effort on the Timor tragedy. In 1982 your predecessor, the ex-Nazi officer Waldheim, was instructed to initiate discussions 'with all the parties directly involved' and to report to the '83 General Assembly. Incredibly, he took this to mean only the Indonesians and Portuguese, and the Timorese were left out of the discussions, as they have been ever since. It is high time this situation was rectified. May I also bring to your attention the fact that on 6th February 1989 Bishop Mnsgr. Carlos Ximenes Belo wrote to you requesting that you hold a UN referendum for self-determination in East Timor. Regrettably, he has still received no reply from you. Timor may not be as glamourous a cause as Kuwait; and of course you will have the US, Britain, Australia, Holland, Japan and the Muslim states impeding and obstructing you. Timor is a litmus test; the UN either supports justice and the rule of law for all, including and especially the weak and friendless, or it makes fine speaches and a fancy charade, and lets the writ of the powerful, the law of the jungle, reign supreme over the UN. The choice must be made, and there is not likely to be a better time than when the present Gulf business is over.

I have written to you before, but have to date received no reply. I hope you will reply to this; the genocidal deaths of 200,000 at the hands of a colonial aggressor is not something that should be ignored or forgotten by you or the rest of the UN. The enslaved survivors of East Timor are waiting for justice.

Yours sincerely,
Paul Barbara.

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